

## NPRM Joint Rule – Plans, Performance Accountability, One-Stop System

### 7. Subpart F—One-Stop Certification

Proposed part 678, subpart F implements the requirements in sec. 121(g) of WIOA that the Local Board certify the one-stop center every 3 years. The certification process is important to setting a minimum level of quality and consistency of services in one-stop centers across a State. The certification criteria allow States to set standard expectations for customer-focused seamless services from a network of employment, training, and related services that help individuals overcome barriers to becoming and staying employed. The Departments seek comments on how local areas can best measure the customer satisfaction of individuals who utilize American Job Centers as an aspect of effectiveness.

§ 678.800 How are one-stop centers and one-stop delivery systems certified for effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement?

Proposed § 678.800(a) requires that State Boards establish criteria and procedures for certification, and allows Local Boards to use additional certification factors in order to respond to labor market, economic, and demographic conditions and trends in the local area. The criteria must assess the effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement of one-stop centers and the one-stop delivery systems.

Proposed § 678.800(b) sets requirements for evaluations of effectiveness, including those mandated by sec. 121(g)(2)(B)(ii) and (iii) of WIOA. States may establish further effectiveness factors, and set specific standards for program coordination or integration. Program coordination standards might include customer focused standards such as: front desk and intake staff are trained to complete an initial assessment of a participant's needs and inform participants of the services available to them; intake forms and basic assessment tools and processes are harmonized across programs to minimize customers filling out multiple forms; and staff work in functional rather than program teams. Program coordination standards might also include operational standards such as: integrated resource teams such as those piloted in the Disability Employment Initiative or other methods are used to jointly fund services to meet the specific needs of individuals; resource rooms include high-quality up-to-date information about the services and supportive services available to individuals; Web sites and materials for the one-stop provide information about the services and supports of all partner programs; and business services teams include representatives or otherwise integrate with key partner programs and represent the center as a whole. This paragraph also emphasizes the importance of maximizing access to services to all customers, particularly outside regular business hours. Access to services can be through a physical one-stop location, but can also be through online or phone access as discussed in the § 678.300(e) definition of "direct linkage," as long as services are equally available to all customers, including those with disabilities. The Departments seek input on other important factors in making one-stop centers operate more efficiently and effectively, both for consideration as one-stop certification criteria and for general program implementation and management.

Proposed paragraph § 678.800(c) describes evaluations of continuous improvement, including those mandated by sec. 121(g)(2)(B)(i) of WIOA. Continuous improvement requires local areas and one-stop centers to collect, analyze and use several types of data, from customer satisfaction and feedback to program and performance data. Professional development is a key feature of any continuous improvement loop, in order to ensure that staff are aware of the implications of recent evidence-based research, and can implement the latest policies and procedures established at the local, State and Federal levels.

Proposed § 678.800(d) describes how Local Boards apply the certification criteria, including that Local Boards must assess the one-stop centers at least once every 3 years. This section also requires that any additional local criteria be reviewed and updated as part of the biennial review and modification process for updating local plans. This provision also explains that this certification must be completed for one stop centers to be eligible to receive infrastructure funds in the State infrastructure funding mechanism, as required by sec. 121(g)(4) of WIOA.

Proposed § 678.800(e) emphasizes that all one-stops must be physically and programmatically accessible. The requirements related to accessibility are set forth in the regulations implementing WIOA sec. 188, at 29 CFR part 37. In addition to complying with the applicable architectural and programmatic accessibility requirements of the proposed regulations, one-stop centers and Boards may wish to consider the use of "universal design," which designs inclusive space and materials to be available to individuals regardless of their range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, intelligence, or educational level. Improved availability, a welcoming atmosphere, inclusive settings, and high quality customer service benefit all customers. Extensive technical assistance is available at [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov), and [www.lep.gov](http://www.lep.gov). The Departments recommend that State Boards and Local Boards engage early with relevant Equal Opportunity officers in establishing the criteria for determining compliance with accessibility standards and other requirements related to providing equal opportunity, particularly for persons with disabilities.